Democracy Promotion and Statebuilding

PS142A.15
Summary

- A primary response to terrorism has been to strengthen states so that they can control extremist groups operating from their territories.

- While supporting democratization, most efforts still face a dilemma:
  - To build a legitimate state requires national leadership close to what the population desires.
  - But international community and/or the U.S. prefer loyal leaders who will enact policies closer to their preferences.
  - In most countries today that require external assistance, these two sets of preferences are far apart.
Westphalian Sovereignty

- Sovereignty (formal equality)
  - Political authority is vested in the state
- Territorial integrity (no transfers by force)
- Non-intervention in “internal” affairs
- Any violence emanating from a state is an act of aggression
  - States are responsible for groups using violence that operate from their territories
  - Norm emerges by late 19th century
Statebuilding

- Problem: What to do with states that lack “capacity”?
- Answer: build “stronger” states
- Liberal Statebuilding
  - Democracy legitimates states by
    - promoting deliberation in a public sphere
    - ensuring government responsiveness
    - promoting “fair” procedures
  - Economic liberalization promotes growth and reinforces democratization
Critique

- Liberal statebuilding nearly always fails
  - Liberalism is not universal
  - Democracy challenges the political equilibrium
    - Powerful groups who will not win elections oppose
  - Economic liberalization also challenges the political equilibrium
- Proponents focus on procedures and timing of liberalization
- Ignores the incentives of the statebuilder(s)
Interests and Indirect Rule

\[ b=0 \quad a \quad d=1 \]
Why are states weak?

Problem of Cycling
ab > bc > ca > ab
The Statebuilder’s Dilemma

If seeking legitimacy only, D sets policy at m (intersection of medians)

If seeking loyalty only, D sets policy at a
Somalia

- Highly factionalized by clans
- Said Barre ruled from 1960-1991
  - Falls from office in midst of widespread famine
  - Somaliland and Puntland de facto secede
  - Rest of country falls into chaos
New World Order

- UN attempts mediation among factions, 1991-1992 (UNOSOM)
- August 1992, U.S. begins providing humanitarian assistance (Operation Provide Relief)
- December 1992, UN and U.S. begin UNITAF
  - Military support to deliver humanitarian aid
  - Mandate limited
  - Due to expire in six weeks
In March 1993, UN and U.S. expand operations in UNOSOM II
  - Mandate expands to include settlement of disputes and political reconciliation
  - U.S. forces scaled back and replaced by poorly trained and equipped UN forces

The hunt for Mohamed Farrah Aidid
  - “Warlord” primarily responsible for overthrowing Said Barre
  - Expected to be next president
  - In implementing liberal plan, UN comes to define Aidid as impediment to democratization
  - Ends in U.S. forces attacking stronghold (Blackhawk Down)
End of Statebuilding Phase I

- With 18 U.S. servicemen killed, Clinton terminates the mission, UN soon follows
- U.S. lack of “will”
  - No real stake in conflict (no specific assets at risk)
  - Drawn into larger political reconstruction by UN
Statebuilding Phase II

- After 2001, U.S. becomes more concerned about “ungoverned spaces”

- Union of Islamic Courts begins to consolidate authority
  - Islamist
  - Irrendentist — once again making claims against the Ogaden

- With “green light” from U.S., Ethiopia invades in 2006, expels the UIC in 2007; Transitional Federal Government is recognized as Republic of Somalia in 2012
  - TFG is seen as extension of Ethiopia (indirect rule)
  - UIC radicalizes and morphs into al-Shabab
Where we are today?

- Somaliland essentially an independent state
- Kenya, Ethiopia, and African Union forces keep al-Shabab in check
- State still fractured and weak
Afghanistan
Afghanistan

- UNSC establishes ISAF in Dec. 2001 to oversee military operations and train Afghan forces
  - Taken over by NATO in Aug. 2003
- At Bonn Conference in Dec. 2001, Hamid Karzai selected to head Interim Administration
- In 2004, under new constitution, Karzai elected president
Hamid Karzai: Our moderate SOB in Kabul

- President from 2001 to 2014
- Fought with the mujahideen against Soviet Union
- Later joined the Northern Alliance, principal U.S. allies
- Strongly allied with U.S. when in power
  - Highly corrupt (CIA money)
  - Rigged elections in 2009; first round negated and unopposed in second round
Ashraf Ghani: Our slightly nicer SOB in Kabul

- Elected president in 2014
  - U.S. negotiates pact between Ghani and challenger Abdullah Abdullah
- Ph.D. in Anthropology (Columbia), taught at Johns Hopkins, worked at World Bank
- Returned to Afghanistan as Finance Minister in 2002
- Honest but has not succeeded in gaining popular legitimacy
- Sept. 28, 2019 election highly contested; winner announced Feb. 19, 2020
  - Ghani wins by 50.64% of vote
  - Rejected by challenger Abdullah Abdullah —setting up parallel government
Continuing Conflict

- U.S. now negotiating with Taliban
  - Trump initiates negotiations in 2018 as part of pledge to bring U.S. troops home
  - Breakthrough agreement on Jan. 29, 2019
    - Taliban pledges never to allow territory to be used by terrorists
    - U.S. agrees to phased withdrawal of troops
- Secret Camp David meeting scheduled for Sept. 2019, contingent on Reduction in Violence “test” period
  - Talks break down with violation of RIV on Sept. 7, 2019
- Started new RIV period on Feb. 22, 2020 for seven days
- Taliban refuses to meet with Ghani until agreement with U.S. Still a very long way to go.
Quest to End “Endless War”

- Trump overcomes the statebuilder’s dilemma by turning Afghanistan over to a “reformed” Taliban
- This deal could likely have been reached in 2002 — if the U.S. had been willing to contentance the Taliban
Conclusion

- Not clear that any statebuilder can unify deeply divided societies like Somalia or Afghanistan, especially after violent disintegration.
- Liberal democracy has certainly not worked.
- Core problem is that statebuilders prefer a pro-Western “puppet” who lacks domestic legitimacy.
- Leaves state weak and ungovernable.
The Dilemma

- If we need states to regulate violence emanating from within their borders,
- but liberal statebuilding does not work
- and statebuilders cannot resist pursuing their own interests in fragile states,
- What are we do to?
  - Can we live with repressive autocrats?